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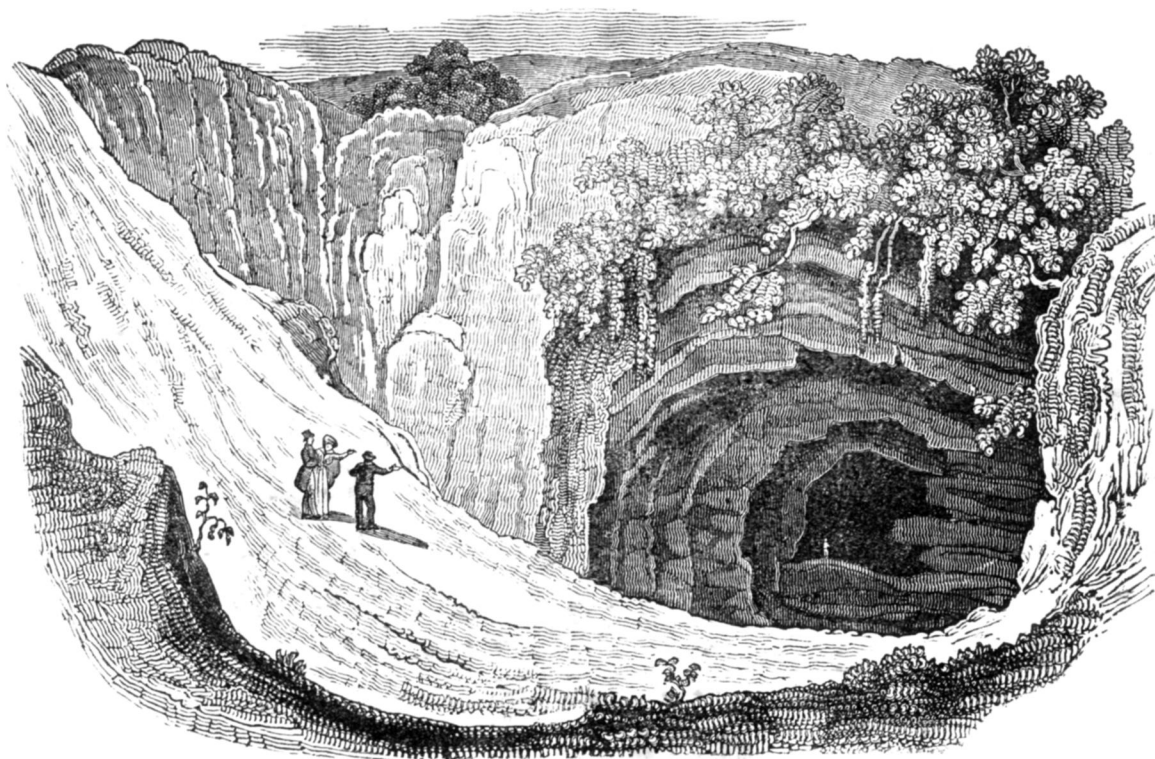
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The Cave of Dunmore.

THE CAVE OF DUNMORE.

To the great and peculiar extent of calcarious or limestone strata of which our island is composed, we may chiefly attribute the fertility of our soil, and the salubrity of our climate; and if we dared venture to fathom the intentions of an Almighty and beneficent providence, we would point to this geological peculiarity, as a signal instance of his wisdom and goodness, as, exposed as we are to the exhalations of the Atlantic, and the influence of westerly winds, our soil would otherwise be unproductive and our climate unhealthy. To the same cause is to be attributed much of the peculiarly romantic beauty of which we may justly boast; our waterfalls without number, our subterranean rivers, our natural bridges, our perpendicular sea cliffs, and above all, our fairy caverns; all these are in almost every instance, the result of this extensive calcarious formation, and are consequently found in no other country of the same extent, in equal variety, beauty, and abundance. Most strange it is, that a land so blessed and ornamented by the hand of providence, should be so little appreciated and too often abandoned by those to whom its fertility gives wealth, and to whom its beauty should give delight and happiness.

We have alluded to the great number of calcarious caverns found in Ireland—they are to be met with in all the provinces, and rival each other in romantic beauty, but that best known for its size and extent is the one of which we present our readers with a sketch in the present number—the Cave of Dunmore. This famous cavern, which is situated near the edge of the calcarious district, in the county of Kilkenny, on the estate of the Marquess of Ormond, and about three miles from the beautiful inland capital of Ireland, is thus accurately described by the able pen of Mr. Banim—a writer of whom not only Kilkenny, but all Ireland may justly feel proud. It leaves us nothing to add.

“The absolute physiognomy of the place is calculated

to excite superstitious notions. In the midst of a level field, a precipitate inclined plane leads down to a sudden pit, across which, like a vast blind arch, the entrance yawns, about eighty (fifty) feet perpendicular, and from thirty to forty wide, overhung and festooned with ivy, lichen, bramble, and a variety of wild shrubs, and tenanted by the owl, the daw, and the carrion crow, that made rustling and screaming exit into the daylight as soon as disturbed by an exploring foot; and when all at once, you stand on the verge of the descent, and look from the cheering day into the pitch darkness of this gaping orifice, repelling and chilling the curiosity that it excited,—giving a promise of something to be discovered, and a threat to the discoverer,—suggesting a region to be traversed so different from our own fair familiar world, and yet a nameless danger to be incurred in the progress,—your heart must be either very callous or very bold, and imagination entirely a blank, if, at the first glance, you feel no usual stir within you.

“After you enter the mouth of the cavern, the light of your torches show you that vast masses of rock protrude, overhead, ready at every step to crush, and held in their place as if by miracle alone. A short distance on, two separate passages branch to the right and to the left. To explore the one, a barrier of steep rocks, made dangerous by the damp slime that covers them, should be scaled; then you proceed along a way of considerable length, sometimes obliged from the lowness of the heading, to stoop on hands and knees, still over slippery rocks, and over deep holes, formed by the constant dripping of the roof; till at last you suddenly enter a spacious and lofty apartment, known by the name of the market-cross, from its containing a petrified mass that has some likeness to the ancient and curious structure, so called. Indeed, throughout the whole chamber, the awful frolic of nature bears comparison with art:—ranges of fluted columns, that seem the production of the chisel, only much dilapidated by time, rise almost at correct distances to the

arching roof; by the way, having necessarily been formed by petrification, drop upon drop, it is astounding to think of the incalculable number of years consumed in the process. And this is the regal fairy hall; and the peasants say, that when the myriad crystalizations that hang about, are, on a gala evening, illuminated, and when the for-ever falling droplets sparkle in the fairy light, the scene becomes too dazzling for mortal vision.

"The other passage winds an equal distance, and leads to the subterranean rill that bubbles, as before mentioned, over scraps of human bones; and over some entire ones, too; we having, when led to the cavern for scenic illustration of the facts of this history, adventurously plunged our hand into the clear water, and taken therefrom a tibia of unusual length; and, indeed, the fact that such human relics are there to be seen, almost a quarter of a mile from the light of the earth, must, if we reject the peasant's fine superstition, show us the misery of some former time of civil conflict, that could compel any wretched fugitive to seek, in the recesses and horrors of such a place, just as much pause as might serve him to starve, die, and rot."

The above description is from that powerful work of fiction, "Crohoore of the bill-hook." P.

WITCHCRAFT IN KILKENNY.

In our next number we intend giving something of the history of Kilkenny; but at present we will just present a short account of the witch-burning business that took place there about the year 1325. The people of Kilkenny need not be ashamed of it; for scarcely more than a century has gone by since the Scotch had a witch burning business of their own; and even in many parts of England the people still dread the effects of the *evil eye*, and the mutterings of an old hag. What we are going to relate occurred in the reign of Edward the Second, about five hundred years ago.

The Lady Alice Kelter was summoned (in or about 1325) before the Bishop to answer to the charge of practising magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. She and her accomplices Petronilla and Basilia, were accused of holding nightly conferences with an imp or evil spirit called Robin Artisson, to whom, in order to make the infernal thing obedient to all their commands, they sacrificed nine red cocks in the middle of the high-way, and offered up the eyes of nine peacocks. The lady Alice, by means of this imp and his associates, caused, every night, the streets of Kilkenny to be swept between the hour of complin prayer and day break. And for what did she do this? To sweeten the town, and make it agreeable? No such thing. Witches are not so benevolently inclined. But it was for the good of her greedy son that she did it, one William Utlaw, a great land pirate, an *avarus Agricola*, a fellow who monopolized all the town parks, and grasped at great possessions. So the cunning mother had all the filth of the city raked to her son's door, to help him to manure his meadows, and such of the inhabitants as ventured to go out at night, heard unearthly brooms plying over the causeway, and fearful looking scavengers were at their dirty work scouring away to a slow chorus chanted as follows:

"To the house of William my son

"Hie all the wealth of Kilkenny town!"

But this was not all. The Lady Alice beat even Captain Freney the robber and all his Kellymount gang in riding amid the darkness of night. No sooner were the nine peacock's eyes thrown into the fire, than up rose Robin the imp, and presented his potent mistress with a pot of ointment with which she oiled her broomstick; and then mounting as gay as Meg Merrilees the Scotch hag, and having along with her, Petronilla and Basilia, her dear friends, she performed a night's journey in a minute, and used to hold a *Sabbat* with other enchanters on the *Devil's Bit* in the county of Tipperary!

This business made a great noise at the time. The Lady Alice Kelter, having powerful friends, escaped to foreign parts; her accomplice, Petronilla, was burned at the cross of Kilkenny. William Utlaw suffered a long imprisonment. On searching the Lady Alice's closet, (as Holingshed relates,) they found a sacramental wafer, having Satan's name stamped thereon, and a pipe of ointment with which she greased her staff, when she would amble and gallop through thick and thin, through fair weather and foul, as she listed!

There are few writers, male or female, to whom we think Ireland owes a greater debt of gratitude than to Miss Charlotte Brooke, a lady whose patriotism led her to translate some of our most beautiful poetical remains, and whose talents enabled her to do them ample justice. For our own part, we regard her memory with the most affectionate reverence, and feel an anxious desire to see her genius more fully appreciated.

This distinguished lady belonged to a family in which *mind* has been, and still continues to be hereditary. She was the daughter of the celebrated Henry Brooke, the author of *Gustavus Vasa*—the *Fool of Quality*, and other valuable works; and she was the cousin of our worthy friend, W. H. Brooke, the artist, whose admirable designs on wood and copper are familiar to many of our readers, and who, we trust, will long continue to exercise his talents to the honour of his country and name. From her father she had the advantage of a careful and liberal education, but it is perhaps to the discernment and encouragement of judicious friends that we are chiefly indebted for the works that have attached such lasting honor to her name, for she was by nature timid and retiring, and would not without force have "suffered herself to be admired." To gratify her friend Joseph Cooper Walker, she made translations of a song and monody by Carolan, to be inserted in that gentleman's interesting *Historic Memoirs of the Irish Bards*—and to those translations was prefixed the following preface, which gives us a true insight into the native modesty of her character.

"For the benefit of the English reader, I shall here give an elegant paraphrase of this monody by a young lady, whose name I am enjoined to conceal; with the modesty ever attendant on true merit, and with the sweet timidity natural to her sex, she shrinks from the public eye."

These were her first published efforts—and the applause which they received, the encouragement of her friends, and her own desire to be useful, concurring to overcome her natural bashfulness, she undertook in the year 1787, to translate a selection of the works of our Irish bards, and in the following year gave the world her inimitable *Reliques of Irish Poetry*. This work obtained for her the applause of all the critics in the periodical reviews of the time, one of whom, in the *Monthly Review* for January, 1793, well observes that she was "so perfectly in possession of the language of poetry, that her version has rendered the whole work interesting to English readers."

In the year 1791, she again came before the public in a work evincing her zealous anxiety to contribute to the diffusion of knowledge and virtue—*The School for Christians, in Dialogues, for the Use of Children*. In the preface to this little work, she informs us, that "her only object in this publication, is the happiness of seeing it become useful to her species, and the pleasure of bestowing the profits of the book, on the enlargement of a little plan she has formed for the charitable education of children whose parents are too poor to afford them the means of instruction."

This was followed by a work of pious veneration to the memory of her father; an edition of all his works, to which she prefixed an elegant little memoir of his life:—and this was the last of her literary labours. On the 29th of March, 1793, she fell a victim to malignant fever, at Cottage near Longford. If the demon of political turmoil be ever banished from our distracted country, and domestic peace take up her abode amongst us, the memory of Charlotte Brooke will be duly honored!

To do justice to the character of this superior woman would require more space than the limits of our little Journal would permit; but there is one feature in it so pure and touching that we must not let it pass without notice—it was her filial piety, the extent of which will be best understood from the following passage in one of her own letters. It is addressed to a female friend on the subject of the completion of the edition of her father's works, a task which subjected her to many mortifications, from the dishonesty and brutality of her printer:—"I suppose I shall lose considerably, besides the far greater vexation of having the work ill done, which is so very dearly paid for. The paper is badly matched; the subscribers complain, and